

# Those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer....

When the steam-spitting, locomotive lumbered through Provo's downtown on a hot, dusty summer day decades ago, Utah County life was much different from what it is today.

Life was slower. Julys were much hotter.

Between 1902 and 1918 when Alice Taylor Cox and Julia Howe Hegstead were girls in Provo the hot summer (without coolers or air conditioners) meant a new life at their parents' summer homes in Springdell up Provo Canyon.

Today Mrs. Hegstead lives in Idaho and frequently visits a daughter in Springville. Mrs. Cox returned to Springdell and is one of the community's permanent residents.

Springdell in the early 1900s was swimming, boating, bonfires and fun, with even more thrown in for more fun, claim Mrs. Cox and Mrs. Hegstead.

When she was a little girl no one lived at Springdell all year, said Mrs. Cox. "That didn't start happening until around 1930, I believe."

Mrs. Hegstead's father, George Howe, owned a store on Provo's Center Street and was one of the founders of Springdell, incorporated around 1895.

Initially summer residents lived in canvas tents, then wooden floors were constructed and wall tents were assembled on these floors.

In early years, travelers came by horse and buggy to Springdell.

Later, the automobile made the trip quicker.

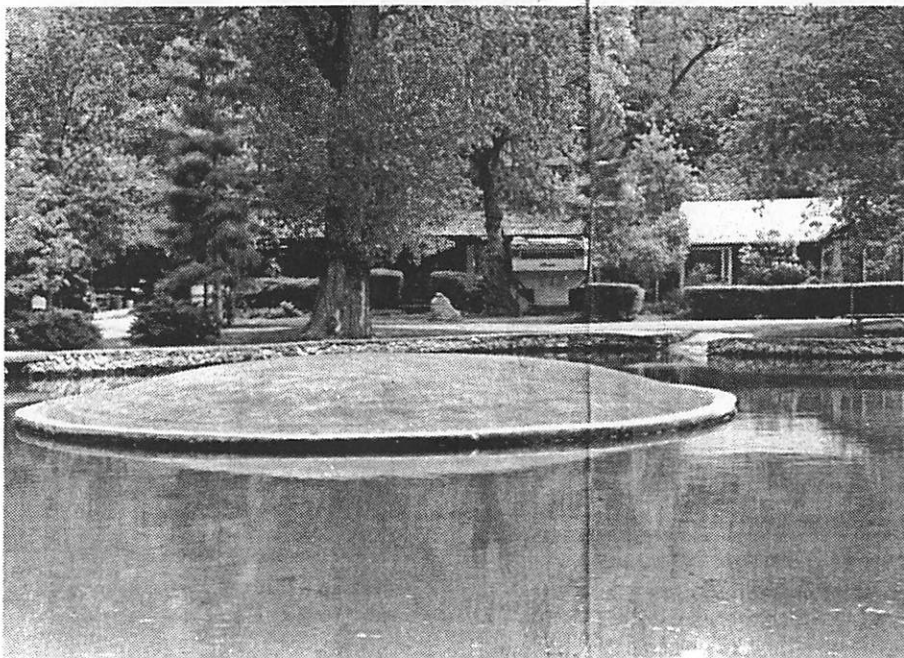
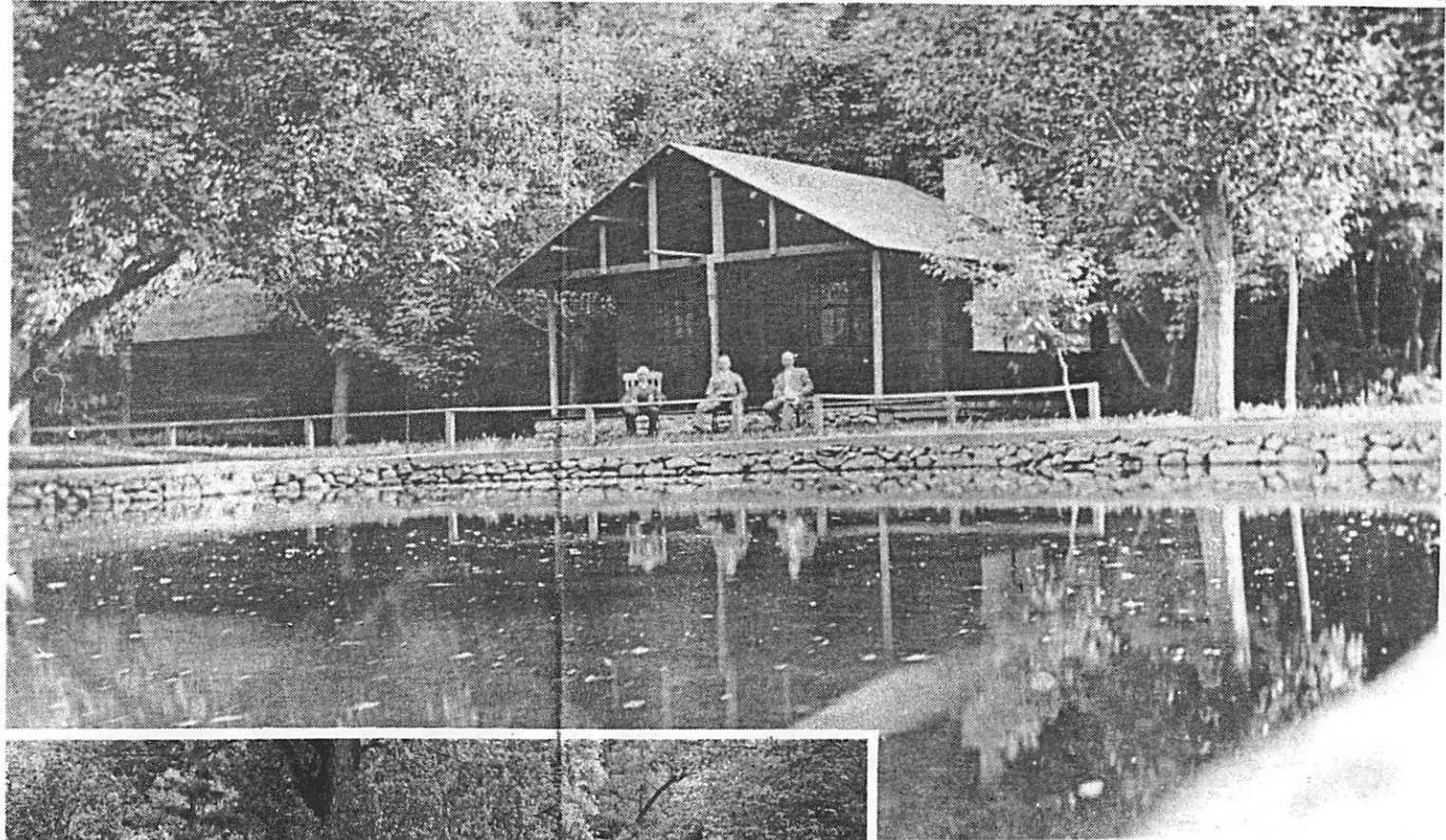
After a while the railroad between Heber and Provo was built and passed by Springdell on the way to Heber each day around 9:30 a.m. It passed by on its way back each afternoon.

"The train's arrival was one of the big events of the day," said Mrs. Hegstead.

"All the children liked to run near the tracks and watch it go by so the adults constructed a platform and benches for us children to sit on when we came to watch it."

Mrs. Cox said, "When the train came by, we would run to see it and to find out who was on it that particular day." She said the train also brought milk for the children in a large milk can.

"If no one was getting on or off the train it wouldn't stop so the engineer blew the steam whistle near Canyon Glen bridge to alert us, and then someone would hand the washed and empty milk can to someone on the train after it



"Uncle Charlie Howe, Mr. Fitzgerald, and Father at Cabin in Springdell, Summer 1913" reads the caption on the photo (top) in Julia Howe Hegsted's photo album. Her parents owned a cabin in Springdell where the family played away the days of summer in cool Provo Canyon. A view near the same area today, (left), shows more modern homes gracing the man-made pond. Homeowners now live year round in the area that was once just summer homes.

Mrs. Hegstead said that as a young girl she started to get excited in spring about prospects of going to Springdell for the summer.

"I can remember asking 'when can we go?'" she said.

"Dad or mom would say, 'We can go when the snow starts melting from Mt. Timpanogos.' That was about the last part of May, I think."

Mrs. Hegstead said she and all the other children would stay at Springdell until summer's end.

Their mothers stayed too, but their fathers had to return to Provo to work. They would travel to Springdell on weekends or each day after work.

"There was always so much to do as children," Mrs. Hegstead said.

"There were craft classes set up by the adults and other classes, and there was swimming in the afternoon. There was singing and bonfires and playing and hiking."

At first, swimmers used Provo River where it split just north of Springdell to form kind of an island.

A small lake was later constructed at Springdell and was filled by the spring there. The lake was also used for boating.

That lake is still a predominant feature at Springdell today.

Most Springdell residents were Provo businessmen or professionals. Mrs. Cox's father was Fred W. Taylor, a Provo physician.

Many of these people bought into Springdell so their children could get out of the hot valley for the summer and to get them into the highly-structured summertime community.

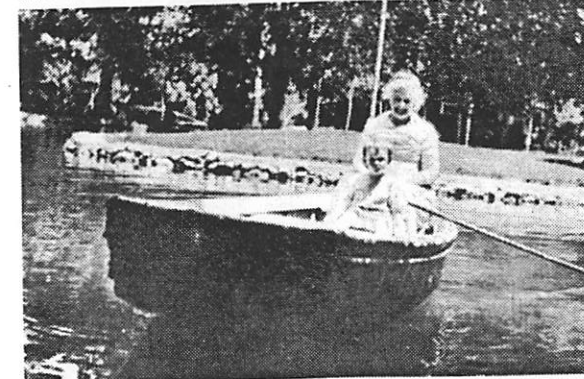
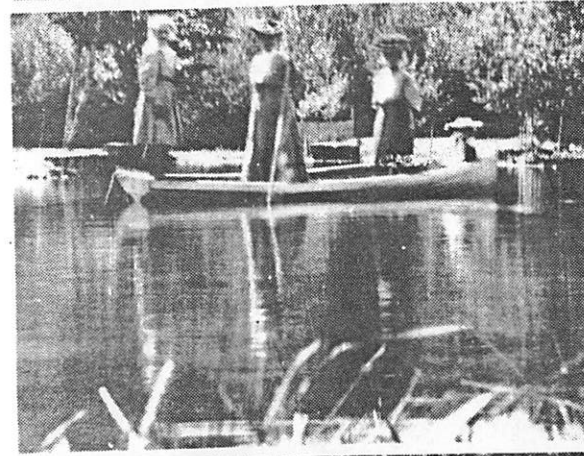
Interested in preserving some of the history of her father and Springdell, Mrs. Hegstead conducted a long, recorded interview with her father in 1948, a year before he died.

On the subject of Springdell, her father said he was looking for a place to build a summer home and visited Provo Canyon.

"I made a visit to Provo Canyon. I was so thrilled with the beauties and grandeur of that canyon, that the idea occurred to me, 'Oh wouldn't it be a wonderful accomplishment, achievement to have a private family summer resort in Provo Canyon.' I was enthusiastic about it and enlisted the interests of R. A. Barney, Joseph T. Farrer, John R. Twelves, L.O. Taft and myself.

"We all made a number of trips through the canyon. Through our investigation, we selected this part of the canyon known as Springdell."

The first 11 residents at Springdell included Hegstead's father, Barney, Farrer, Twelves, Taft, and Josiah Beck, Lafayette



Holbrook, C.F. Decker, Jesse M. Smith, and C.E. Loose, and Fred W. Taylor, Mrs. Cox's father.

In 1911 more Springdell stockholders were added including Jesse Knight, R. Eugene Allen, W. Lester Mangum, Geo. M. Smoot, H.J. Richards, C.R. Howe, J. William Knight, Jacob Evans, John Roundy, Iona Knight, C.H. Knight, C.H. Ward, George H. Brimhall, and Walter R. Pike.

Mrs. Hegstead said there was barely a minute that was not

organized for the children.

"Many of the adults were teachers at B.Y. High and they organized and taught classes on art and other cultural subjects."

One of the favorite hiking areas was on a hill south of Springdell. "We called in Nob Hill because it was kind of knob-shaped," Mrs. Hegstead said.

"At first there were snakes there, but a farmer and his pigs were brought in and there weren't so many (snakes) after that.

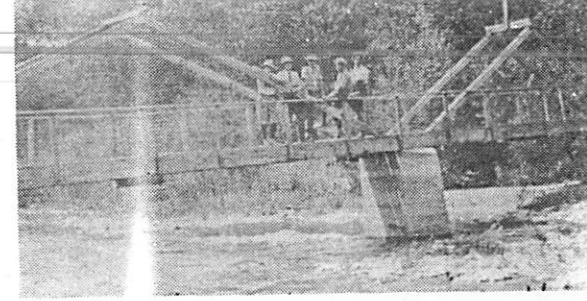
The first summer homes at Springdell in Provo Canyon were really just tents (top left), pitched by families from the valley trying to escape the heat.

The bridges in the area were obviously very different in the early 1900s (top and middle right), but a favorite place to pose for a picture with friends.

Edna Howe, Mrs. Howe and Julia Howe, (middle left) posed for cameramen in a boat at the Springdell lake in 1906.

The Howe family often enjoyed boating on the man-made lake at Springdell where they went for the summer. Mrs. Howe and Amy Howe (bottom left) merrily row along in 1918.

"Donnans, Provo Canyon, Summer 1913" is the caption under this photo (bottom right) in the Hegstead album. Small cabins in the woods were as alluring to city dwellers then as now.



community. "Families were so close back then and centered so much

around us children," said Mrs. Cox. "I remember having so much fun as a child."

"On the Fourth of July we would go up there and raise the flag up a flagpole." Both Mrs. Cox and Mrs. Hegstead also remember the "big fire."

"Someone started a fire in the grass and it threatened the houses. The adults got on the houses with hoses and we children were told to run to the island where we would be safe," Mrs. Cox said.

The fire finally was put out with little damage to the

**Story by  
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